

Addiction and Grace: STEP THREE

FROM THE BIG BOOK OF AA:

“ (against the prejudice of believing in God) The word GOD still aroused a certain antipathy. When the thought was expressed that there might be a God person to me, this feeling was intensified. I didn’t like the idea. I could go with such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature but I resisted the thought of a Czar of Heaven, however loving His sway might be. I have since talked with scores of men who felt the same way.” (13)

“My friend then suggested what seemed a novel idea. He said, ‘Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?’ That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last.

It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point.

Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with humans when we want Him enough. At long last, I saw, I felt, I believed.” Bill W

“We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him: ‘God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!’” (63) Big Book of AA

Addiction and Grace: Gerry May

“There can be no doubt that God is adamant about being God..But God’s insistence is grounded in love rather than in selfishness. We have had God’s breath in us since the beginning, and God knows that the fulfillment we long for will come from nothing other than God’s self...

Thus the powerful, monolithic God of the Old Testament speaks tenderly and with hope: ‘ Then when you call to me, and come to plead with me, I will listen to you. When you seek me you shall find me, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me’...For I am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior.’

When Jesus appeared on earth, his self-proclaimed reason was to fulfill the Torah. He did not wish to change the Law itself, but he vehemently attacked those who were addicted to its letter instead of really loving its author. In the context of addiction, the essence of Jesus’ teachings can be seen as threefold. First, He gave a powerful, unequivocal restatement of relinquishing attachments in order to love God and neighbor with a full, undivided heart...Second, he both explained and exemplified the nature of a life free from attachments, lived in true liberation, and love. ‘I am gentle of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.’ Third, he established the way toward fulfillment, the Good News.

Jesus’ existence as the divine incarnation proved that instead of hoarding the qualities of divinity, God wished to share them through a right relationship with humanity. The events of Jesus’ life, leading to his crucifixion, demonstrated the threat he posed to people’s addictions and the lengths to which they would go to protect their attachments. In turn, the crucifixion demonstrated the extent to which God would go to liberate people from their attachments. Jesus proclaimed there was no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends, and then he proceeded to do just that. Finally, Christ’s resurrection proclaimed absolute and unquestioned victory over attachment itself, over its consequences and over its causes.” 113

“We may have been taught that grace is present, available and victorious, and we can try to believe it is true, but it is only through risking it in actual life situations that we give substance to our belief. As we risk believing and survive, we learn that what we risked was true.” (129)